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America's Warfighting Center

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Fire destroys post home

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Staff writer

Fort Riley firefighters responded to an eight-plex fire on post at 1:36 a.m. Jan. 4.

The 13 firefighters dispatched to the fire had it extinguished within 30 minutes after their arrival and contained the blaze to the one upstairs apartment.

"We did a good job of extinguishing the blaze and controlling the scene," said Post Fire Chief

Mike Cook. No one suffered injuries and the cause of the fire is under investigation, he Jan. 4. Several people were treated for smoke inhalation, Danielle Bega-Silva, Red Cross disaster liaison for Fort Riley, said.

The roof above the burned apartment, which was on the top level of the eight-plex, was open and the balcony was on the ground after the fire had been put out.

Maintenance crews were boarding up open areas around 9

a.m. Jan. 4.

Pam Newman, family housing chief in the Directorate of Public Works, said one apartment was destroyed in the building at 6766 Burnside Loop and the other seven sustained smoke damage.

Seven homes received smoke damage and the other family's home was destroyed, she said.

Red Cross workers on post relocated six families living in the eight-plex to the Days Inn in Junction City, Bega-Silva said. One family is currently

deployed and the other is on vacation, she said.

The families were able to go back to their homes to retrieve personal items shortly after the fire was extinguished. Two children were among those evacuated from the building.

Newman said two inspectors from Public Works were at the scene the morning of Jan. 4 to assess the damage and would know the full extent of damage and expenses by the afternoon of Jan. 5.



A gaping hole is all that remains of one second floor Burnside Heights apartment after a fire Jan. 4. Six Fort Riley families in the building were displaced by the fire and smoke damage.
Post/Morelock

Beware drivers

Cell phone use restricted

Drivers are prohibited from using a cell phone while driving on Fort Riley unless they use a hands-free device.

Post law enforcement officers began issuing warning citations in December and plan to issue court appearance citations beginning this month.

Around the Army

Europe:

The European Stars and Stripes reported Jan. 5 that every project requested for Europe received full funding under the fiscal 2006 military construction appropriations act.

The act became law Nov. 30 and gave Department of Defense facilities in Europe \$372,258,000 for projects ranging from new housing to fuel pipelines.

One of those key bases, Grafenwohr, received the largest amount – more than \$84 million. Construction projects there include barracks, a live-fire facility and an urban assault course.

Ramstein Air Base, Germany, will use its nearly \$63 million for 101 housing units; Incirlik, Turkey, will spend \$22.73 million on 100 housing units and RAF Lakenheath, England, will get 107 new housing units for \$48.437 million.

For more on this story and other U.S. military news in the European and Pacific theaters, visit www.eastripes.com on the Web.

Fort Knox:

The Turret reported Dec. 15 that U.S. Rep. Ron Lewis, R-Ky's 2nd District, held a press conference inside the Patton Museum to say he had been assured by the Secretary of the Army's office that the museum would stay on Fort Knox.

The Patton Museum Foundation, which is in the middle of a \$35 million expansion campaign, was faced with losing most, if not all, of the museum's artifacts, including the main draw – the Patton Collection.

Although the Patton family has donated much of the famed WWII general's personal artifacts, the Army can move the collection to Fort Benning, Ga., if it chooses to do so.

For more on this story and other Fort Knox, Ky., news, visit www.thewesternpost.com/turret/ on the Web.

1 back, 1 delayed



Friends and family welcome home members of the advance party of 2nd Bn., 34th Armor, and 3rd Brigade Combat Team at a redeployment ceremony. The Soldiers returned to Fort Riley following a year-long deployment to Iraq. The ceremony began during the early morning hours of Dec. 28 at Fort Riley's Marshall Army Airfield.
Post/Skidmore

3rd Brigade party returns

By Gary Skidmore
Command Info Officer



Post/Skidmore
Sgt. Kenneth Krings of HHC, 2nd Bn., 70th Armor, is welcomed home during a redeployment ceremony. The ceremony welcomed home members of the advance party of 2nd Bn., 34th Armor, and 3rd Brigade Combat Team Dec. 28 at Fort Riley.

A deafening cheer erupted as Soldiers making up the advanced parties of the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor, and 3rd Brigade Combat Team stepped into Hangar 817 at Marshall Army Airfield just after midnight Dec. 28. About 150 Soldiers returned to Fort Riley after nearly a year-long deployment to Iraq.

"Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you," said Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy, commanding general, 24th Infantry Division (Mech) and Fort Riley, as he addressed the formation of Soldiers. "This is a great way to begin a new year and truly

the perfect way to close out the old year ... getting all of you back here tonight."

Hardy told the Soldiers that just as the Christmas holiday is a symbol of hope for people around the world, they were a symbol of hope for the Iraqi people. He added that because of the Soldiers of the 2nd Bn., 34th Armor, and 3rd BCT, the lives of Iraqis will continue to improve.

Hardy listed some of the Soldiers' accomplishments: Helping the Iraqis rebuild themselves, helping them establish their own security, helping them reestablish their economy, their schools, their neighbor-

See 3rd Brigade, Page 8

1st Brigade units face new missions, deployment delayed

By Anna Morelock
Staff writer

The 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, won't deploy to Iraq as a brigade, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced late in December.

A Defense Department news release stated the decision not to deploy the brigade as a whole was based on the "demonstrated capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces in establishing primary security conditions in the recent Iraqi elections."

The Defense Department reported the number of trained and equipped ISF members rose from 115,000 to more than 216,000 in past year.

More progress was shown by the transition of controlled battle space to ISF battalions. In March 2005, only three battalions controlled space in Baghdad. Now, 33 battalions control

space throughout Iraq, it reported.

Smaller units within the 1st Bde. will be called in 2006 to fill several specific missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said Col. Bart Howard, the brigade commander, during a press conference at Fort Riley Dec. 29 after official notification of the change in mission.

Brigade leaders have not been told the specifics of possible new missions, Howard said, but the brigade anticipates 2006 missions relating to the training of the Iraqi Army and possible use of brigade elements for security forces in Iraq.

For example, Howard said, six Soldiers deployed a few days ago with the brigade's radar detachment. "It's a unique system, and it was a capability that was required, and we were pre-

See 1st Brigade, Page 3



Post/Stairrett
Spec. Michael Eddy talks to members of the Kansas City and Junction City news media about not deploying to Iraq. Eddy is a Soldier in the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, that was scheduled to deploy to Iraq in December. Col. Bart Howard, 1st Bde. commander, announced Dec. 23 that the brigade had received official notification of their re-missioning.

Married Soldiers may owe back premiums

By Mike Heronemus
Editor

Dual military families and married Soldiers must pay all back premiums owed for Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance they didn't want unless they

have proof they declined the automatic coverage for spouses – including active duty military spouses.

Some of those back premiums have amounted to \$300 to \$400 for Fort Riley Soldiers, said 1st Lt. Scott Benedict, executive officer of Detachment E, 15th Per-

sonnel Services Battalion. Benedict was appointed the action officer on Fort Riley to help the Defense Department identify Soldiers in arrears and recoup back premiums.

In most cases, nonpayment of the premiums has been unintentional, Benedict pointed out.

Congress enacted a law in November 2001 that extended SGLI benefits to all family members. Spouses enrolled in DEERS – Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System – for medical and other Defense Department benefits were automatically covered for \$100,000 and each child

for \$10,000.

Unless a Soldier declined the insurance, premiums would be deducted automatically from the Soldier's pay. In some cases, the premiums never kicked into the pay system, Benedict explained.

See Premiums, Page 4





Post, Army news briefly

Aviation officer briefing planned

Anyone interested in becoming an aviation warrant officer can attend a special briefing at 1 p.m. Jan. 20 in the Patton Hall auditorium on Main Post. The briefing will cover requirements and application procedures for attending Warrant Officer Candidate School and Army flight training.

For more information, call Maj. Ray Meadows at 239-3398.

Defense bill to aid survivors

The Defense Authorization Bill includes a measure that requires the Department of Defense to establish a comprehensive policy on casualty assistance to survivors when a member of the Armed Forces dies while in military service. The bill requires the DoD to establish an integrated Web site to inform servicemembers and their survivors of their benefit entitlements.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs launched a similar Web site, located at <http://www.vba.va.gov/Survivors>.

Units to help non-citizens

The Department of Defense has partnered with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to assist non-citizen military personnel with their citizenship applications.

The goal is to streamline and expedite the handling of their applications.

The Department of the Army has directed its battalion and brigade combat team SIs, personnel services battalions, personnel services centers, military personnel divisions and military personnel offices to assist Soldiers with their applications for citizenship and to coordinate with the U.S. Army Human Resources Command to facilitate the process.

The procedures for Soldiers to apply for citizenship under the military facilitated program and the responsibilities of the battalion or brigade combat team SIs, PSBs, PSCs, MPDs and MILPOs to assist them are explained in "The Soldier's Guide to Citizenship Application."

The Web site for this guide is at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/TAGD/pssd/ins.htm>.

AAFES opens new shops

The Army and Air Force Exchange System has opened new shops at Fort Riley to serve customers better. New businesses on post include:

- a barber shop in Building 7640, open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday
- a UPS store in Building 7640, open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday

- a car audio shop in Building 5320, open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday

- a Cellular One Kiosk shop in the Main PX mall, open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday

- a T-shirt shop in Building 6914, open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday

Riley's to offer lunch buffets

Beginning Jan. 17, Riley's Conference Center will offer a lunch buffet from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For \$6.50, diners will receive a hot entree with side dish, soup of the day, gourmet salad bar, and iced tea or water to drink.

BOSS sets meeting

Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers unit representatives will meet at 3 p.m. Jan. 11 in Riley's Conference Center.

For more information, call 239-8147.

King holiday alters pickup

The post refuse schedule will change Jan. 16-20 in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday. The schedule is:

Jan. 16 – No pick up
Jan. 17 – Colyer Manor, Main Post and dumpster at Building 621.

Jan. 18 – Ellis Heights, O'Donnell Heights, Monthi Heights, Peterson Heights north of Thomas Avenue, Marshall Army Airfield and dumpsters at Buildings 28, 45, 470, 540, 542 and 5309.

Jan. 19 – Warner Heights, Burnside Heights and dumpster at Building 621. (No change from regular schedule.)

Jan. 20 – Meade Heights, McClellan Heights, South Warner Heights, Peterson Heights south of Thomas Avenue and dumpster at building 5309. (No change from regular schedule.)

For more information, call Paul Cassella at 239-6274.

Wackenhut sets job fair on post

A recruiter from The Wackenhut Corporation will be at the Army Career and Alumni Program Center in Room 6, Building 210, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Jan. 12.

The recruiter will be providing information about the company, accepting applications and conducting preliminary interviews for armed elite custom protection officer openings in Ft. Lauderdale, Boca Raton and West Palm Beach, Fla.

Service honors four Soldiers

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Staff writer

A bond forms between Soldiers that can't be explained, said Sgt. William Stucker.

"It's more than a friendship – it's a brotherhood," he said. "I lost a brother."

Stucker paid tribute to his brothers, three fallen Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor, and another from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 70th Armor, Dec. 21 at a memorial service at Fort Riley's Morris Hill Chapel.

Staff Sgt. Michael S. Zyla, 32, Sgt. Brian C. Karim, 22, Spc. James C. Kesinger, 32, and Spc. Peter J. Navarro, 20, were killed Dec. 13 when an improvised explosive device detonated near their "Humvee" in Taji, Iraq.

Soldiers of the 2nd Bn., 70th Armor, are attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, early this year. Zyla, Karim, Kesinger and Navarro had different backgrounds, but they were united in their desire to serve their nation and their sense of duty to each other, said Lt. Col. David West, the brigade's rear detachment commander, said.

Navarro returned home on emergency leave in July after the death of his younger brother. While at home, he told his dad that "the Joes are like family," West said. Navarro's mother tried to convince him to stay, but Navarro reportedly replied, "I have to go back. I don't want them to be a man short."

Zyla enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1992 as an infantryman, later joined the Army National Guard and then joined the Army in 1998. West recalled a time

when Staff Sgt. Sam Phillips, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, Co. A, 2nd Bn., 70th Armor, asked Zyla why he switched services.

"Well, I'm burned out on pounding ground. I figure I can hitch a ride on the battlefield as a tankie," he remarked.

He is survived by his wife, Teresa; sons, Michael and Christopher; daughters, Emily and Opal; mother, Irene; stepfather, Dennis; and brother, James.

Karim loved being a tanker so much, he was prepared to re-enlist for five more years, West said. He was known as a social, hard-working, highly motivated Soldier who surprised Sgt. Christopher Vargas the first time they met, West recalled being told.

"At first glance, he looked like a clean-cut Pakistani-looking kid with a name that looked like it was pronounced Kar-EEM. But as soon as he opened his mouth and words began to flow, you would be shocked to hear the country accent you've ever heard," West said.

Karim is survived by his wife and high school sweetheart, Rachel; daughter, Janessa; moth-



Sgt. Brian Karim



Spc. Peter Navarro



Spc. James Kesinger



Staff Sgt. Michael Zyla

er, Vera; father, Garland; brother, Steven; and sister, Shannon.

Kesinger, a medic, was a dedicated family man who Staff Sgt. John Filiatrault said a l w a y s thought of his fellow Soldiers first and himself last.

"It was the kind of selfless service that you frequently hear of but seldom see," Filiatrault said.

He served a tour in Iraq as part of the Army Reserve and then entered the Army in 2002. Filiatrault said he only knew Kesinger a few months, but said Kesinger put the kind of effort into his work that caught people's attention.

"What I learned about him, I will remember for the rest of my life," Filiatrault said.

Kesinger is survived by his wife, Sanjuana; sons, Jared, Justice and Robert; daughters, Melody, Maelynn, Brianna, Meredith and Megan; mother, Deanna; and father, Clifford.

Navarro was a young Soldier who excelled in his high school's JROTC program and experienced military life as a Navy family member, West said. Navarro passed on attending college because he wanted to do some-

thing that would make a difference now, he added.

Spc. Adrian Roland remembered him as the kind of man who would pull an extra guard shift so he could visit with and keep company with the Soldier who relieved him.

Navarro is survived by his mother, Rowena; father, Jose; and brother, Kevin.

Lt. Col. Leopoldo Quintas, 2nd Bn., 70th Armor, commander, said the Soldiers in "Ace Red 3" – the military code name for the four-man unit – were magnificent. Through it all, they showed compassion in treating the sick and wounded, and through their actions every day, they provided the Iraqi people a perfect example of a free society and what a successful democracy could achieve, he said about that service.

Zyla, Karim, Kesinger and Navarro were conducting operations directly in support of the Iraqi elections, West said. Their mission was to prevent the enemy from attacking a town by establishing an observation post to take control of a known mortar and rocket firing point.

Stucker said no one enjoys being in Iraq, separated from their families and loved ones, but there was a silent understanding of why they were there.

They were professional Soldiers who were protecting their wives, children and loved ones by answering a call few chose to answer, he said.

"Their names will be placed on a monument somewhere and with time, will fade from the memory of those that did not know them," he said. "But to those of us that knew them, loved them, their memory will live on."

COLLEGE HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH
2 x 2"
Black Only
2x2 College Hghts/3m TF

THE MARTIN AGENCY
4 x 10"
Black Only
camera phones A6632NF40B

AFTER DARK VIDEO
2 x 2"
Black Only
2x2 After Dk Video/3m TF

COTTONWOOD THEATERS
1 x 3"
Black Only
1x3 Cottonwood

LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
1 x 3"
Black Only
1X3 Lighthouse Jan TF

CHANGING TIMES BOUTIQUE
2 x 2"
Black Only
2x2 CTB JanTF





Post, Army news briefly

Hurricane relief medals created

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have approved two new medals for servicemembers who participated in Katrina and Rita hurricane relief efforts.

Military personnel eligible for the award "directly participated in the immediate humanitarian relief operations in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas (east of 96 degrees west longitude) from Aug. 29 to Oct. 13."

The Armed Forces Service Medal, meanwhile, is earmarked for servicemembers who worked in direct support of the hurricane relief operations for either 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days.

A servicemember may qualify for both medals, but the place, time and actions for which he or she is awarded each one cannot overlap.

Servicemembers whose names are not collected, but believe they qualify, can request the medal through the office of the commanding officer under which they served during the operation.

Changes affect savings plan

Military members and civilian employees may contribute the full amount allowed by the Internal Revenue Service annual elective deferral limit — \$15,000 — to their Thrift Savings Plan in 2006.

Investing in TSP is not limited to stocks. People can choose safer government securities or invest in the new Lifecycle Funds.

Employees may start, change, stop or resume their TSP contributions at any time. Servicemembers also can invest all or part of their bonuses, special pay or incentive pay, as long as the member also contributes from basic pay.

Those serving in tax-free combat zones are allowed up to \$44,000 in annual contributions.

Military members can enroll or change their contribution amount through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Website at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> or by filling out a form TSP-U-1 at local military personnel finance offices.

More information about the Thrift Savings Plan can be found in the booklet "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan" on the TSP home page at <http://www.tsp.gov/> under civilian or uniformed services TSP Forms and Publications.

TRICARE fees may increase

Defense Department officials have drafted plans to raise TRICARE enrollment fees and deductibles sharply over the next three years for military retirees under age 65 and their families. The increases would affect about 3 million beneficiaries.

If the changes are adopted, annual enrollment fees for TRICARE Prime would triple by October 2008 for working-age retired officers and double for enlisted retirees.

Yearly deductibles for retirees using TRICARE Standard would double for officers and rise by a third for enlisted.

For the first time, retirees who use TRICARE Standard would pay an enrollment fee in addition to their deductible.

Pharmacy co-payments would be raised for all retirees and their families, regardless of age, if they use the retail drug network or the TRICARE mail order program to buy brand-name drugs on the military formulary.

Veterans groups are fighting the proposed changes

General explains troop reduction

By Jim Garamone
AFPS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., commander of Multinational Force Iraq, said Dec. 23 that President Bush had accepted his recommendation that the number of American forces in Iraq drop over the coming months.

Progress with the Iraqi security forces means the number of American brigades in Iraq can drop from 17 to 15. The 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, will remain at Fort Riley and the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, will deploy to Kuwait rather than to Iraq, to be ready if needed. The 2nd Brigade is based in Baumholder, Germany.

"It's a call-forward force," Casey said during a meeting with reporters. "It's a hedge against the

uncertainty of the next few months."

Casey said he might recommend further reductions in the spring. The announced reduction will bring the level of U.S. troops in Iraq down to below the 138,000-man baseline that was in place before the Coalition bulked up for the election. "The number will settle out at about 130,000," Casey said.

The reduction is a result of the progress in Iraq, he said. In the past year there have been three elections, and in each case participation climbed while violence dropped, Casey said.



Gen. George Casey Jr.

1st Brigade continued from page 1

pared to do that," Howard said of the Soldiers' recent deployment.

The 1st Bde., 1st Inf. Div., deployed to Iraq from September 2003 to September 2004 and were prepared to deploy again, Howard said.

The brigade shipped its equipment to a Texas port in anticipation of the planned deployment, but that equipment will return to Fort Riley so the brigade can continue to train for future missions, he added.

Howard said the training that prepared Soldiers in the brigade to deploy this December would help them with upcoming missions. Until the brigade learns exactly what new missions they will be training for, the brigade will continue to train for contingencies, he said.

"Always there's a possibility in 2006 that we'll receive some other missions using our capabilities. It's an indicator that the next big focus is how to train the Iraqi army," Howard said.

Future missions for 1st Bde., 1st Inf. Div., and the size and composition of the U.S. force in



Post/Stairrett

Col. Bart Howard answers questions about the re-missioning of the 1st Bde., 1st Inf. Div., Dec. 23. Howard had just announced that 3,500 Soldiers in the 1st Bde. would not deploy to Iraq in 2006 as an entire brigade.

Iraq will continue to fluctuate as focus shifts from combat operations to the training and support of the ISF, according to DoD officials.

The announcement created an exciting time for the brigade,

Iraqi security forces handled the elections, and many are in the lead in the counterinsurgency effort in Iraq. "It's a demonstration that the strategy we've been working on — to basically bring the insurgency to levels that can be contained by increasingly capable Iraqis — is kicking in," the general said.

Casey said the process will be "measured and gradual" and will play out over the next year or two.

Coalition forces will continue to provide support for Iraqi troops as necessary. Transportation, medical evacuation, logistics and maintenance support will continue, but efforts will go into developing those capabilities in Iraqi forces and at the Ministry of Defense, Casey said.

Military transition teams and special police transition teams will continue to work with Iraqi units. "All the new Iraqi units will

continue to have transition teams assigned to them," he said. "We are also in 2006 going to enhance our police partnership. While we've had transition teams with the special police, we haven't partnered with them. We're going to do that now."

The number of attacks in Iraq has dropped, and that figured into the troop level calculus, Casey said. Operations along the western border of Iraq and those in the western Euphrates River valley have had "a real positive impact" on stopping suicide bombers or money or equipment from coming into the country.

Casey said more than 60 suicide bombings occurred in June. In November, that number dropped to 26.

Casey said he feels confident that his command can handle the mission with fewer troops.

ward to."

The Soldiers know there is work ahead in 2006, but the announcement came as a relief to members of the 1st Bde., 1st Inf. Div., Howard said.

"They're enjoying the fact that Christmas, that the holiday period, is a special time; and to be able to have that (time) off is important to them," he said.

Spc. Jason Rose described the announcement as "great." He said that it was somewhat expected, but that it was a relief to him and the rest of the brigade to have it made officially.

Rose learned of the announcement the morning of the press conference hadn't told his family. "I've already been there once, and going a second time wouldn't hurt my feelings," Rose said, "but I'm sure my family is very relieved."

Spc. Juan Cruz said he told his family that he won't be leaving in December, but that he's still unsure of future plans.

"I told them just to plan for the worst," Cruz said. "Then, if it's better, that's a plus."

SUNFLOWER BANK - SALINA
3 x 10.5"
Black only
3d0.5 ABC

USA DISCOUNTERS
3 x 10.5"
Black only
B&W/PJ 12/30



Post, Army news briefly

Warfare center offers course

The Air Mobility Warfare Center's Mobility Operations School's interactive distance-learning Introduction to Air Mobility Operations Course is available online at http://www.amwc.af.mil/student_info.asp.

Course planners estimate it takes roughly eight hours to complete the course, and it is open to active, reserve and civilian Department of Defense members of all ranks.

In this course, students will study the complexities, requirements, limitations and resources available in planning and conducting air mobility operations.

For more information, call the school at DSN 650-7722, (609) 754-7722 or (609) 754-7722 or send e-mail to <mailto:AMWCdis-tancelearning@mcguire.af.mil>.

Residents may keep lights on

Many post residents choose to decorate the outside of their quarters for Christmas. Normally, Christmas lights should be down by the middle of January, but those families who wish to leave their lights up for their Soldier's return from deployment are allowed to do so this year.

Commander plans address

Col. Thomas "Ty" Smith plans to address Fort Riley civilian employees in two sessions Jan. 19. The first session begins at 10 a.m. and the second begins at 1:30 p.m. Both sessions will be in Barlow Theater, Building 7866, on Custer Hill. Employees need attend only one session.

CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS- THAYER
3 x 10.5"
Black Only
3X10.5 Charter Sony 12/2

Premiums

continued from page 1

Department of Veterans Affairs and Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials recently determined the Department of Defense may owe the DVA as much as \$25 million in unpaid FSGLI premiums, stated a September message to all major commands.

The message directed leaders in the National Guard Bureau, Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve and major Army commands to help correct the shortage by identifying Soldiers who owe the back insurance premiums and collecting those premiums.

One of the big problems lies with dual-military families, Benedict said. When Soldiers marry Soldiers, they must enroll their spouses as dependents in DEERS, he said. When that happens, the automatic FSGLI kicks in unless they decline the coverage.

Because some Soldiers didn't realize the military considers a military spouse the same as a dependent when it comes to the insurance coverage, they didn't know they had to decline the coverage if they didn't want to pay the premium, Benedict explained.

"Many didn't realize they needed to make a decision about FSGLI because they figured they're both in the military and can be covered by their own SGLI," Benedict said.

In those cases, the Soldiers did not know they had to decline the extra coverage if they didn't want to pay the added premiums, he said, so some Soldiers may owe premiums all the way back to when the law was enacted—November 2001—if they were married before November 2001.

Married Soldiers who do not see FSGLI premium amounts withheld on their Leave and Earnings Statement and who do not have paperwork showing they declined the coverage will have to pay the back premiums. If they do not want more back premiums to accrue, they need to report to 15th PSD to fill out paperwork declining the insurance, Benedict said.

Soldiers married to Soldiers can choose to keep the FSGLI coverage and continue to have the premiums deducted from future paychecks, he said. A Soldier married to a military spouse would receive both benefits—the \$400,000 for SGLI and the \$100,000 for FSGLI—if the spouse dies on active duty and those are the coverage amounts they selected, Benedict said.

A Soldier also can elect less than \$100,000 coverage for a spouse, Benedict added, reducing future premium amounts in accordance with the coverage amount. Insurance coverage for spouses begins at \$10,000 and increases in \$10,000 increments to the maximum \$100,000, he said.

Fort Riley's DEERS and personnel specialists are working together to prevent this situation arising for Soldiers in the future, Benedict said. "Soldiers enrolling family members in DEERS, including their military spouses, are being told to come see me to fill out the insurance paperwork," Benedict said.

Soldiers who decline coverage this month would be refunded the January premium but would still be charged for premiums dating back to when they were married or November 2001, whichever is later, he said.

STATE FARM INSURANCE
2 x 1"
Black Only
2x1 Ladonna TF

Legally speaking

Preparation eases tax filing

By Christopher A. Callicott
Legal assistance attorney



Capt. Chris Callicott

Income tax season begins with the turn of the New Year. Many people dread filing their taxes. However, individuals can take three steps that will make filing taxes easier. By following these simple steps, anyone can make filing taxes more efficient and painless for everyone involved.

First, get organized. Certain pieces of information are absolutely necessary in order to file a tax return.

Whether filing taxes yourself or having a tax preparer file them for you, organization on your part will save time and headaches. Having the information in one location will make it easier to find and easier to give to a tax preparer.

First, consider organizing these items in an envelope or folder:

- Personal data. Make sure you know your social security number, as well as the social security numbers for your spouse and any children claimed as dependents. You will also need to know the dates of birth of your spouse and children. If you have children in child care, make sure you get the child care provider's tax identification number and a statement showing how much you paid for child care services.

- Address. If you moved this year, make sure that you know your current address as well as any other addresses where you lived during 2005.

- W-2 forms. For military members, print your W-2 forms from the myPay Web site. If you

are married and your spouse worked, you will need your spouse's W-2 forms as well.

- 1099 forms. These forms are sent by banks or bro-

kerages and show the income that you earned on interest-bearing accounts and taxable dividends. They are also a record of retiree pay.

- IRA contributions. Contributions to a tax-deferred IRA can reduce taxable income. You should receive a form from the company managing your IRA listing your contributions.

- Mortgage interest and student loan interest payments. These show how much of your payments over the year went toward interest. Your lender should mail these around the first of the year.

- Rental property receipts. If you own rental property, you must report the rents received as income. You may be able to reduce your taxable income by keeping receipts that show your expenses related to the upkeep of the property.

- Other receipts. If you plan to itemize your deductions, you must have proof of the various deductions you are claiming.

Second, decide your status.

Most people know if they are single or married. Issues may arise with those in the middle of a divorce or those who have sole custody of a minor

child. Your filing status will impact the amount of taxes due. Make sure you understand the impact your status will have on your return.

- If you are single and have no children, file as single.

- If you are married, with or without children, it is to your advantage to file as married filing jointly. Even if your spouse is deployed or you are separated, it is in your favor to file your return jointly.

- If you are in the middle of a divorce, and you cannot agree to a division of a refund, you may have no other option but to file as married filing separate.

- Single parents may qualify to file as a head of household.

Third, get filed. All your organization and decisions will be for nothing if you do not actually file your return. The IRS will not give you a refund, even if you are entitled to one, if you do not file a return.

You can file your return by yourself or, if you are a Soldier, family member or retiree, you can have the Fort Riley Tax Center file your return.

The Tax Center will e-file your federal return, prepare your state return and help you get your refund as quickly as possible.

The Fort Riley Tax Center will be located in building 7264, the Soldier and Family Support Center, starting Jan. 17. The phone number is 239-1040.

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of tax articles written by Capt. Christopher A. Callicott of the post staff judge advocate's office.

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Commentary

Friday, January 6, 2006

Fort Riley Post

Page 5

Riley Roundtable

This week's question:

What New Year's resolution do you think leaders at Fort Riley should have made?



"Better support of troops – especially guys living in the barracks."

Sgt. 1st Class David Bemiss
Infantry
1st Battalion, 41st Infantry
Home: Fort Pierce, Fla.



"The bridge coming from the air field – get it done before June, ahead of schedule."

Master Sgt. David Black
Computer Crimes Coordinator
1001st Military Police Battalion
Home: Lee's Summit, Mo.



"Taking care of Soldiers all around, not just saying it."

Staff Sgt. Justin McCall
Chief of military pay
15th Personnel Services Battalion
Home: Baltimore, Md.



"To keep Soldiers better informed about deployments."

Pfc. Jon Nelson
1st Battalion, 34th Armor
Home: Round Rock, Texas



"Maintain the same focus on improving Soldier and family quality of life."

Maj. Dana Stowell
Rear detachment commander
2nd Battalion, 34th Armor
Home: Leavenworth, Kan.

Next week's question:

How long should Iraq deployments be and why do you feel that way?

Opinions may be e-mailed to the editor at mike.heronemus@riley.army.mil or faxed to the editor at 239-2592. Opinions must reach the editor by close of business Tuesdays to appear in the following Friday's paper.

Soldiers could save hundreds of dollars

By Nicholas Anderson
and Patti Wentling
SJA's Office

Kansas provides significant tax savings for active duty Soldiers who register automobiles. But, Soldiers must provide proper documentation in order to take advantage of these savings.

Eileen King, Riley County treasurer, said Kansas law could save Soldiers \$100 to \$600 annually, depending on the value of the vehicle being registered.

Active duty Soldiers who claim a state other than Kansas as their home of record are exempt from paying property tax on vehicles they register. To qualify for this tax exemption, the Soldier must provide the Motor Vehicle Office with the following:

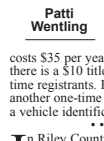
(1) a copy of a Leave and Earnings Statement showing any state other than Kansas as the Soldier's home of record;
(2) a copy of orders assigning the Soldier to Fort Riley;

(3) the title showing that the Soldier is an owner of the vehicle; and
(4) military ID.

Active duty Soldiers who claim Kansas as their home of record and are stationed at Fort Riley must pay property tax on the vehicles they register. Kansas residents called to active duty as reservists are exempt from paying property tax on two vehicles



Capt. Nicholas Anderson



Patti Wentling

costs \$35 per year. In addition, there is a \$10 title fee for first-time registrants. Finally there is another one-time \$10 cash fee for a vehicle identification check.

In Riley County, the vehicle identification check is available from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. In Geary County, the vehicle identification check is available

for the period they are on active duty.

Non-resident Soldiers should be prepared to pay \$55 to register their vehicles for the first time in Kansas.

Registration costs \$35 per year. In addition, there is a \$10 title fee for first-time registrants. Finally there is another one-time \$10 cash fee for a vehicle identification check.

from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at the sheriff's office on the corner of 9th and Franklin Sts.

In Dickinson County, vehicle identification checks are available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Custom "vanity" license plates are available for an additional \$43 for a five-year series. Kansas also provides distinctive license plates for members of the National Guard, Purple Heart recipients, former Prisoners of War and military veterans.

An honorable discharge is required to receive a veteran license plate.

Free legal assistance, whether related to vehicle registration or not, is available to Fort Riley Soldiers and their family members in Patton Hall, Building 200. Appointments are available by calling (785) 239-3117.

Command message

Military achieved extraordinary success

Editor's note: The following comments were made by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld during a December interview and published in an Armed Forces Press Service article written by Donna Miles.

The year 2005 was a year of extraordinary contributions by the U.S. military. The new year will bring an opportunity to continue building on those efforts and transforming the military into a 21st-century force.

Accomplishments included humanitarian efforts following the tsunami in South Asia on Dec. 26, 2004, the devastating Oct. 8 earthquake in Pakistan and hurricanes Katrina and Rita along the Gulf coast in August and September.

While supporting these missions, the U.S. military played a key role in liberating more than 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq and enabling both countries to hold historic free elections.

These contributions have come through exceptional sacrifice by servicemembers, many of whom were away from their families and loved ones during the holidays.

We have the finest military on the face of the earth. We also



Donald Rumsfeld

have the finest military that we have ever had.

No one was drafted, no one was conscripted, no one was forced to do anything they didn't want to do. They stood up and said, "Send me."

Besides helping in South Asia after the tsunami, in Pakistan after its devastating earthquake and in the U.S. Gulf states after the hurricanes, they have liberated over 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The U.S. military is helping create an environment where these countries can develop democracies and provide all of their people, no matter their gender or their religion, an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a free system. This has to be noble work. Servicemembers know it is noble work. They are proud of it, and they should be.

In the year ahead, the U.S. military will continue its progress in Iraq and Afghanistan and stand by, ready to lend its unique capabilities

to natural disasters and other extraordinary events.

At the same time, the military will continue positioning itself to meet future challenges. We have to continue transforming this great institution so we can shift our weight more toward irregular warfare and the kinds of challenges we are likely to meet in the 21st century.

This includes refining the military's ability to contribute to homeland defense and to protect Americans from the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists and rogue states.

It also means continuing to move beyond the Cold War era military structure and to extend the expeditionary qualities already in the Navy, Air Force and Marines to the Army.

We have to continue to make adjustments that will enable our military to be swift and agile and deployable.

While transforming the force and increasing its capabilities, the focus will remain on the military's most critical building block: its men and women in uniform. We have to continue to see that we are able to attract and keep the kinds of talent we need.



Letter to editor

Maps, more politeness would help newcomers

I am new to this post and living on post. I used to be active duty.

I think that there should be more of a welcome for spouses coming to Fort Riley. I had no idea where to go, had no map and this is a really spread out post. People on this post were just down right rude when I found them.

I realize that people get tired, but they wouldn't have jobs without our Soldiers.

I think it would be great if we had a way to grade them in the paper (the Post) – maybe that would make them work a little nicer – not just that ICE thing. I don't think that works. It (the rating) has to be somewhere everyone can see.

I always helped spouses get familiar with post when I was on active duty.

Melannie Covington
Military spouse

Post Reader Feedback Form

How does the Post rate?

	Poor	Fair	Good
Interesting articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Valuable information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mix of unit, community news	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photo coverage of events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entertainment coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of paper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy to read, understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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What are your concerns or suggestions for improvement?

Your name (optional) and phone number (if you would like to talk about your ideas): _____

FORT RILEY POST

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Dreadnaughts' journey nears its end

By Phillip M. LaCasse
2nd Bn., 34th Armor

The departure of the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley in September 2003 for its deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II left the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, as something of an orphan battalion on post.

At that time, every other maneuver battalion at Fort Riley was deployed in support of OIF II, leaving 2nd Bn., 34th Armor, to hold down the home front.

"We were the independent tank battalion," said Lt. Col. Oscar J. Hall IV, commander of 2nd Bn., 34th Armor. "We were the only show left in town."

In April 2004, Hall and then-Maj. Richard D. Creed Jr., the battalion's operations officer, traveled to Fort Drum, N.Y., to meet with leadership of the 42nd Infantry Division and the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. During subsequent planning sessions, it was decided that 2nd Bn., 34th Armor, would deploy to Iraq in support of OIF III as part of the "Sledgehammer Brigade."

"We became the adopted sons of the 'Sledgehammer Brigade,'"

Hall said. "We were the new addition; but after all we have been through, we will always be part of the family."

The relationship that began in April 2004 in an old World War II-era barracks continued throughout a Mission Rehearsal Exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center, a commanders' workshop at Fort Benning, Ga., and the eventual deployment to Iraq.

"During the months leading up to the deployment, we trained independently or jointly with 3rd BCT, belonged to 3rd BCT, reported to 1st Brigade, 1st Inf. Div., and had to meet deployment requirements by the 24th Infantry Division (Mech) at Fort Riley, 3rd Inf. Div., at Fort Stewart (Ga.) and the 42nd Inf. Div. from New York," Hall said. "It was an extremely complex reporting chain."

After nearly a year in Iraq, the battalion's impending return home gives the Soldiers and leaders in the battalion cause to reflect on the past 18 months, including their sacrifices and accomplishments while deployed.

"I am most proud of the sacrifices our Soldiers have made," said Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas A. Falkner. "It's been a year that a son, daughter,



father or mother has not been home."

In addition to the sacrifices made by each and every deployed Soldier, combat operations did not leave the battalion unscathed.

"Twenty four great Soldiers in this battalion were wounded in action," Hall said, "and two Soldiers, Spc. David L. Rice and Spc. Christopher W. Dickinson, made the ultimate sacrifice. We will never forget them."

In spite of the losses, the Soldiers of Task Force 2-34 Armor made a significant and tangible impact during its time in Iraq, the task force conducted more than 3,500 combat patrols, spent more than 20,000 man-hours "outside the wire" conducting full spectrum counterinsurgency operations and executed upwards of 100 combat missions that detained more than 225 suspected insurgents.

"We have accomplished a lot during this deployment," said

Spc. Brian T. Meyers of Freeport, Ill. "We made our sector safer to travel. We made the villages safer for the people of Iraq."

Arguably the most strategically significant contribution from Task Force 2-34 Armor in Iraq was its work with Iraqi Security Forces.

In addition to a two-week combat survival course at Forward Operating Base Gabe that trained hundreds of Iraqi army soldiers and Iraqi police officers, the battalion's Military Transition Team worked closely with and mentored the 4th Iraqi Army Battalion.

Additionally, the battalion implemented a Joint Security Working Group that met weekly before the Constitutional Referendum in October and the national

election in December. At these meetings, leadership from the Iraqi army, Iraqi police and Coalition forces coordinated security responsibilities in order to ensure that all citizens had the opportunity to vote in a safe and secure environment.

"We helped support the Iraqi army as part of the MiTT team," said Sgt. Zachary M. Schaaf, a gunner for the Task Force 2-34 Armor mortar platoon. "We conducted numerous raids, route clearances and mortar live fires in support of IA operations."

As the timetable for redeployment nears, Task Force 2-34 Armor comes closer and closer to leaving the 3rd BCT and returning home to Fort Riley.

"We are on the twilight of the

deployment," Hall said, "and we can see from here how far we've come. The time has almost come to part ways with the mighty 'Sledgehammer Brigade,' but we know that we will always be part of the family."



CID Soldiers welcomed home

Commander praises unique organization

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Staff writer

Maj. Gen. Donald Ryder, commanding general, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, said he had one mission Dec. 30: to look the Soldiers of the 48th and 380th Military Police Detachments (CID) in their eyes, shake their hands and thank them for a job well done.

Ryder, Lt. Col. Jimmy McConico, commander of the 1001st Military Police Battalion (CID) and Maj. Gen. Dennis E. Hardy, commanding general of the 24th Infantry Division (Mech) and Fort Riley, welcomed 20 Soldiers from the 380th MP Det. and 18 Soldiers of the 48th MP Det. home from a year-long deployment to Iraq.

The 380th MP Det. deployed to the southern portion of Iraq, where they filled criminal investigative missions in Kuwait, Tallil and Camp Bucca. The 48th MP

Det. went to Camp Victory, Baghdad, and Abu Ghraib Prison.

Four Soldiers convoyed to Abu Ghraib Prison in search of a U.S. Soldier missing in action. On that trip, an improvised explosive device blew up about 60 meters behind their vehicle. Three Soldiers of the 48th were present during an April indirect and small arms fire attack on the prison. As a result, one Soldier earned a Combat Action Badge.

The detachments, described by officials as a "hodge podge" of Soldiers, completed a workload of 1,100 cases, Ryder said. The two units formed and trained at Fort Riley as two separate multi-component organizations and deployed as one organization.

McConico said the existence of the two detachments was nothing short of outstanding. He praised the plug-and-play capabilities and modularity of the formation.

"... of all these Soldiers to our front ... you won't even find five

that are from the same unit. That is absolutely incredible," he said.

The 380th is a U.S. Army Reserve unit stationed in Oakland, Calif. Soldiers who comprise the 380th come from Texas, California, Washington, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Arizona. The 48th is an active duty unit from Fort Carson, Colo. Its Soldiers come from the Republic of South Korea, Colorado, Washington, New Mexico, Oklahoma, California, Hawaii and Kansas.

"We don't have Reserve Soldiers. What we have are Soldiers assigned to the U.S. Army Reserve Command," McConico said. "What we have are Soldiers assigned against the active duty roles in the U.S. Army."

McConico said it was a shame to break the formation up. "The most capable organization to do what you've done in Iraq and Kuwait just walked off the field," he said to the Soldiers. "That's a significant accomplishment."

4th Brigade 'tops' graduate

Staff report

Sixteen new first sergeants – informally referred to as "Top Sergeants" – of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team at Fort Riley graduated from a special first sergeant class Dec. 16 at the Distance Training Facility on post.

The course was specially arranged for the newly promoted senior company noncommissioned officers of the new brigade, said Jack Lucas, who supervises training at the facility

for Fort Riley's Education Services.

The course was broadcast from the Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, to Fort Riley and other Distance Training Facilities at Fort Lewis, Wash., in Hawaii and in Alaska.

The class began Nov. 27. Students had to complete the Phase I correspondence portion of the course before beginning Phase II at the Distance Training Facility.

Three first sergeants – Sean M. Polwoort, J.B. Thomas III and William C. Zappa – completed the

course with special recognition for exceeding course standards.

Thomas and 1st Sgt. Matt W. Delay earned achievement certificates for scores of 300 and 299, respectively, on the Army Physical Fitness Test given to students.

Other graduates were 1st Sgts. Richard A. Canullo, Gerald K. Cornell, John F. Padgett, Darrell Peebles, Thomas L. Pendleton, Darrell G. Snell, Richard R. Strong, Brian S. Waterman, Corbett L. Whitmore, Todd E. Ziegler, Charles A. Lanns and Robert E. Simmons.

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Sgt. 1st Class Neil Morrison, a Lebanon, N.H. native and explosive ordnance disposal technician with the 710th Ordnance Company, packs a 1,000-pound bomb with plastic explosives in Taji, Iraq, Dec. 16. The 3rd Bde., 1st Armored Div., was tasked with management of the Taji ammo dump known as Area Echo and diligently worked with contractors and explosive ordnance disposal teams to clear the compound of all munitions.

Task Force destroys tons of stashed ammunition

By Kevin Bromley
3rd Brigade PAO

TAJI, Iraq – “Fire in the hole. Fire in the hole,” shouted Sgt. 1st Class Neil Morrison just before he detonated seven 1,000-pound bombs nearly simultaneously Dec. 16.

The resulting explosion and shockwave shattered the afternoon’s post-rain silence and signaled the end of a year-long project to rid an old Saddam regime ammunition dump of its deadly stores.

The ammunition dump, known as Area Echo and located north of Baghdad, housed tons of ordnance stockpiled by Saddam Hussein’s military.

The area contained everything from small caliber ammunition, mortars and artillery shells to larger weapons, such as 1,000-pound bombs and surface-to-air

missiles.

Sgt. 1st Class Neil Morrison and Spc. Joshua Peltz of the 710th Ordnance Company busied themselves in the early morning preparing the last of the munitions for destruction.

“Each of the bombs contains almost 450 pounds of explosive material,” Morrison said.

“We don’t usually get to detonate aircraft bombs. We don’t get to blow up this much material very often,” he said.

Morrison and Peltz prepared the bombs by placing plastic explosives and blasting caps in each one.

“We use three to four times the amount of explosives normally used in the fuses to detonate these bombs,” Morrison said. “We want to make sure it functions.”

The 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, was tasked with management of Area Echo and its members worked diligently with



A fireball and shockwave cone shoots into the sky in Taji north of Baghdad. The white mist cloud was created when two shockwaves of simultaneously exploding bombs met. Explosive ordnance disposal technicians detonated the last seven 1,000-pound bombs in Taji, Dec. 16.

contractors and explosive ordnance disposal teams to clear the compound of all munitions.

“Coalition forces started clearing Taji around May 2003,” said

Capt. Eric Swenson, assistant brigade engineer.

Swenson estimated that nearly 24,000 tons of munitions had been destroyed in Area Echo.

3rd Brigade continued from page 1

hoods and their businesses.

“You were there as the government of Iraq took shape. You were there as they drafted a constitution this past summer and as the constitution was ratified during a national election where more than 10 million people voted in October, and again during another national election this month.

“Yes, just like Christmas everywhere, you represent a symbol of hope for the Iraqi people and for people around the world,” Hardy assured the returning Soldiers.

After the speech, Hardy called the formation of weary Soldiers to attention, and in his traditional

gesture, dismissed the Soldiers to their waiting families.

Thirty of Sgt. Kenneth Krings’ family and friends drove to Fort Riley from Nebraska to welcome the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 70th Armor, Soldier home.

His group made up of aunts, uncles, friends, parents, cousins and his wife formed a tight circle around him following the ceremony, each taking a turn to hug and welcome him home.

“This is wonderful,” Krings said while hugging members of his teary eyed family. “This is the best Christmas ever.”

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Fort Riley Community Life

Friday, January 6, 2006

America's Warfighting Center

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Community news briefly

Chapel women preview studies

The Protestant Women of the Chapel at Fort Riley invite everyone to join them from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Jan. 10 for a preview of their planned spring session of spiritual studies.

The group will be revealing its plans for seven studies to help individuals build their house on the Lord.

The event includes fun, fellowship, lunch and free childcare.

Spouses' club to host bingo

The Fort Riley Officers' and Civilians' Spouses' Club will host its annual Polish Pottery Bingo at 11:30 a.m. Jan. 19 at Riley's Conference Center. Lunch will be pineapple glazed baked ham, citrus salad, au gratin potatoes, winter vegetable blend and apple cobbler for dessert.

Only OCS members can attend, but individuals can join at the event for \$7.50 for the second half of the year.

RSVP for the luncheon reservations at fortrileyocsc.com or 784-8454 by Jan. 11.

For childcare reservations, call 784-2793 by Jan. 14.

Post students can graduate

MANHATTAN – More than 1,350 students were candidates for graduation from Kansas State University this fall. Commencement ceremonies were Dec. 9 and 10 in Manhattan and Salina.

Fort Riley students eligible for graduation included:

Cynthia Alvarez, bachelor of arts;

Clifton Arthur Garza, bachelor of science in agriculture;

Mollie Nina Borders, bachelor of science; and

Leann E. Konken, bachelor of science in elementary education.

Story times feature horses

Saturday story times at the Post Library resume at 1:30 and 4 p.m. Jan. 7 with stories about horses and ponies.

The first story will be "Winter's Gift" by Jane Monroe Donovan. A mare about to give birth in a snowstorm struggles to find shelter. As a lonely farmer cares for her and her foal, he finds hope and love for the new year.

The Post Library is located in Building 5306 on Custer Hill. Operating hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

For more information, call 239-5305.

School Age Services listed

Jan. 7 – 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., free child care for families of deployed Soldiers

Jan. 7 – 6 to 10 p.m., Parents Night Out

Jan. 9 – Arts and Crafts Center, 3rd through 5th grades

Jan. 11 – Custer Hill Bowling Center, 1st through 5th grades

Jan. 13 – Field trip to Manhattan Public Library, 1st through 5th grades

For more information, call 239-9220.

AAFES plans PX near commissary

By Anna Morelock
Staff writer

Army and Air Force Exchange System officials plan to put a new Post Exchange amidst other buildings springing up on post to accommodate the scheduled growth over the next few years.

The current PX already is too small to accommodate the Soldiers we have, said Stan Young, AAFES general manager at Fort Riley.

Although many details are still in the works, he said the new store should open in late 2008 or early 2009 next to the Commissary on Trooper Drive.

The new store will house about 170,000 square feet of space, 70,000 more square feet than the current PX. The old PX will remain, but what it will be used for is one of the details still up for debate, Young said.

Military clothing will stay there and probably expand, Young said. A furniture department may possibly remain there and might be expanded, he said. Multiple ideas are floating around and it's just too far out to know for sure, he added.

Other store departments will have room to spread out at the new location. Clothing will be dramatically expanded, Young said.

The Class Six store will move to the new location and expand. The concession area will be larger, too, he said.

Food service will become an important commodity on post, Young said. AAFES plans to add several new food options. Brands

springing up on post in the next 24 months could include Captain D's Seafood, Manchu Wok, Burger King Express and a Subway or Blimpie.

Shoppers on post also will be doing some shuffling. The Forsyth Shoppette will expand, the Custer Hill Shoppette will probably move and a new shoppette will be added somewhere on Custer Hill, Young said.

Soldier dads

New dad teaches others to care for kids

By Anna Morelock
Staff writer

Boot camp provides Soldiers with the basic skills they need to survive in the Army. It doesn't, however, provide them with the skills they need to survive as a military father. That is where "Boot Camp for New Dads" comes in.

"Boot Camp for New Dads" is designed to help fathers become more comfortable with their role as fathers, said class facilitator Jim Williams. A lot of times, dads are left out of the picture, but they need to have a bond with the child from the beginning, just like moms do, he added.

"We want dads to be more comfortable with an infant, know what his role is and know how to take care of mom before and after the birth," Williams said.

Sgt. Jim Nowak is a boot camp veteran and also attended "Dads in the 21st Century" and "Becoming a Love and Logic Parent" workshops.

"I joke around about that," Nowak said. "With all the classes I've been to lately, I could probably teach the class now."

Nowak, with the assistance of his 1-month-old son, Ty, will do just that. As a veteran dad, Nowak will instruct rookie dads in such things as changing diapers and burping babies during the workshop Jan. 23.

Nowak wasn't a total stranger to children before he started the classes. Besides Ty, he has two step-children,



Post/Morelock

Sgt. Jim Nowak sits on the couch in his home with his 1-month-old son, Ty, 7-year-old Chloe and 5-year-old Seth. Nowak said he attended "Boot Camp for New Dads" to become the best dad he could be; Chloe insisted he was a great dad before the class.

Chloe, 7, and Seth, 5. When Nowak first met his wife, Sue, Chloe was 3 years old and Seth, 2. So, although he's been around children, Nowak didn't have experience with a newborn. When a flyer for boot camp arrived from his kids' school, Nowak said he decided to attend to see what he could learn.

Sue said her husband was a good father before he took the classes, but they have really learned some great things from his attending.

"The best sign of a good father is usually that he's looking and trying to be a better father," Sue said. "So, he was a great dad before he went up

there, but it's nice to have him come home and he's all excited."

Nowak said he decided to attend the class because he wanted to be the best father he could be. He enjoyed the classes so much, he now helps as a veteran dad and encourages other dads to attend.

Nowak said he would highly recommend the classes to anyone, especially military fathers. In the Love and Logic class, which is geared toward mothers and fathers, Nowak learned about different styles of parenting – the helicopter, the drill sergeant and the consultant.

A lot of military fathers are geared toward the drill sergeant

style. The "his is my way or the highway" approach, he said. The classes teach you to be aware of how you're raising your kids, he explained.

"There are dads that go to work, come home, turn on the football game, eat and go to bed. That's it. They don't spend any time with the children. You just being there and supporting them financially, that doesn't cut it," Nowak said. "The most important thing about the dad class is that (it) teaches you that you need to be an involved parent."

Besides helping fathers learn how to take an active part in

See "Boot Camp", Page 10

Term II classes slated on post

Staff report

The new school term at Fort Riley University will begin soon with classes such as conflict resolution, management theory and application, juvenile justice, state and local government, algebra and public speaking.

For more information about classes offered at Fort Riley, contact Education Services at (785) 239-6481 or (785) 239-9485.

Kansas State University is offering Culture and Conflict Jan. 9 through March 13; Violence Prevention and Intervention March 20 through May 20 and Introduction to American Ethnic Studies March 6 through May 3.

The classes go from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Classes can be taken for undergraduate credit, and Culture and Conflict and Violence Prevention and Intervention can also be taken for graduate credit toward the conflict resolution certificate.

Classes are in eight-week sessions and meet Mondays and Wednesdays on Main Post from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Introduction to American Ethnic Studies is offered through videoconferencing.

Students can enroll up to the start date of the class. For more information about the courses, call (785) 239-0685.

Barton County Community College is offering Principles of Microeconomics and English Composition I 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays Jan. 9 through March 13 and Database Management, Public Speaking, Principles of Grammar, Form and Style and Elementary German I 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays Jan. 19 through March 9.

Hybrid classes, which combine online and in-class work, are in seven sessions: Mondays Jan. 9 through March 13, Tuesdays Jan. 10 through March 9, Wednesdays Jan. 11 through March 8, Thursdays Jan. 12 through March 9, Mondays and Wednesdays Jan. 9 through March 13, Thursdays and Fridays Jan. 12 through March 10 and Mondays and Fridays March 6 through 10.

Session one includes Small Business Records I, Children Literature, English Composition II, American Civil War, Vietnam War, Personal and Community Health and General Psychology. Session two includes General Accounting, Spreadsheet Applications, Principles of Macroeconomics, Western Civilization to 1500, Ergonomics, Elements of Statistics and Introduction to Sociology.

Session three includes Human Relations in Business, Introduction to Emergency Management, Short Story, Basic Algebra and Micro Computers Repair and Upgrade II.

See Classes, Page 10

Irwin's first 2006 baby born Jan. 1

By Jan Clark
IACH PAO

Northern Iowa college sweethearts 1st Lt. Thomas Slykhuus and his wife, Amy, welcomed their son, Landon Mark, at 1:55 p.m. New Year's Day at Irwin Army Community Hospital.

Weighing in at 9 pounds, 4 ounces, the 21-inch newborn 2was the first child born at the hospital in 2006 and the first child for the couple.

Following a longstanding tradition at Fort Riley, Col. Marilyn H.

Brooks, hospital commander, presented the new parents with a selection of gifts donated by IACH's Circle of Care, various Family Readiness Groups on post, the Red Cross Mothers Outreach Program and individuals.

New mom Amy is a social worker in Manhattan. Dad is a platoon leader with 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry.

Slykhuus was deployed for a short time, but said there were no definite plans for a future deployment that he knew of. "But, I'm making my points by being here now, just in case," he said.



IACH Photo/Clark

Landon Mark Slykhuus, the first baby born at Irwin Army Community Hospital in 2006; his dad, 1st Lt. Thomas Slykhuus; and mom, Amy, accept a gift basket from Capt. Amber Pocrnich, head nurse in the Women, Infant Care Center; Col. Marilyn Brooks, IACH commander; and Col. Linda Robinette, deputy commander for health services.





Post, Army news briefly

Dance classes scheduled

Daytime Dance Dynamo classes are planned for 5- to 7-year-olds from 4 to 4:45 p.m. Mondays and for 3- to 4-year-olds on Wednesdays from 1:30 to 2 p.m. and 2 to 2:30 p.m., 2:30 to 3 p.m. and 3 to 3:30 p.m. in Child and Youth Services, Building 6620.

Classes begin Feb. 1. Registration begins in January. For more information, call 239-4847.

Program offers guitar classes

Child and Youth Services' SKIES program will offer guitar classes beginning Jan. 6. Sessions of group guitar lessons will be offered: from 7 to 8 p.m. and from 8 to 9 p.m. The 7 p.m. class is for children 11 to 18 years old. Classes must have at least five and no more than 10 students signed up.

For more information, call Central Registration at 239-4847.

Teen Center lists activities

Jan. 7 - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., basketball

Jan. 13 - 8 to 10:30 p.m., middle school dance
For more information, call the Teen Center at 239-9222.

Support Center lists activities

Jan. 19 - 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Family Readiness Group Leader Basic Class

For more information, call the Soldier and Family Support Center at 239-9435.

Bible study offered

Officers' Christian Fellowship groups meet on- and off-post on different days of the week for Bible study.

To find out more, officers may contact Ben or Laura Saine at 717-2760, Dave or Felitz Velloney at 717-2820, Jess or Sarah Curry at 532-9177 or Bob or Renee Teetsel at 784-4480.

Crafts center lists activities

Jan. 9 - 6 p.m., beginning sewing; 7 p.m., crochet, knitting and cross stitch.

Jan. 10 - 6 to 9 p.m., matting and framing

Jan. 11 - Noon to 1 p.m., Make it, Take it
Open hours for using the Arts and Crafts Center's wood shop, ceramics studio, matting and framing studio, computer lab, photography lab and doing stained glass, sewing, quilting, basket weaving and leatherwork are:

Monday and Tuesday from 1 to 8:30 p.m.
Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Santa gets some help

Santa's newest helper, Elfvis, rocks the house during a Christmas recital at Fort Riley Elementary School Nov. 15.

Photo by Capt. Kollin Taylor, 4th IBCT



'Boot Camp' continued from page 9

their child's life, the classes also deal with topics such as deployment, non-traditional families and communication. The classes deal with pretty much any situation you can think of, Nowak said.

"I highly recommend it for people coming back from deployments or getting ready to deploy, because it'll teach you ways to deal with what you're about to go through."

"You don't really think too much about what your family is going to go through, you think more of what you're going to go through missing everybody, and so they teach you what to expect. They teach you to be understanding and try to see things from all points of view," Nowak said.

Another reason to take the class, Nowak said, is to learn ways to get your kids to listen, respond and to help lessen stress between parents and children. Of course, he added, it only makes a difference if you actually apply the techniques.

"There's a big difference in how the kids will respond to you," Nowak said. "It's like watching Nanny 911."

The Nowaks agreed the classes worked well for them. Although theirs weren't rampaging kids by any means, Sue said, some of the techniques have really helped a lot with the kids. After one class, the couple actually applied a problem-solving technique Nowak learned in class that day.

"Seth started going crazy in the store, started whining and crying," Nowak said. "So, we started using the technique and it worked great. We were just amazed."

"They're really nice classes," Sue said. "They just give you alternatives to what we were probably raised with, like spanking and stuff like that."

One alternative Sue explained was to give children more choices - smaller choices, such as what kind of cereal to have for breakfast or what outfit to wear that day.

"That way, when you take a

Parenting classes

What: "Boot Camp for New Dads"

A three-hour workshop taught to fathers by fathers and babies. Utilizing a man-to-man training approach, veteran dads and their newborns orient rookie dads who are expecting their first baby. Boot Camp is designed to build confidence and prepare first-time fathers for the challenges of fatherhood.

When: 6 to 9 p.m. Jan. 23

Where: Family Network Learning Center, 700 N. Jefferson St., Junction City

To sign up: (785) 717-4021 or jimwilliams@usd475.org

Admission: Free

What: "Dads in the 21st Century"

A six-session class designed to examine the unique role and contributions of the father in a child's life. Learn how to bond with your kids and gain support for your efforts in improving your relationship with your children.

When: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Jan. 24, 26 and 31 and Feb. 2, 7, and 9

Where: Family Network Learning Center, 700 N. Jefferson St., Junction City

To Sign Up: (785) 717-4021 or jimwilliams@usd475.org

Admission: Free

Also look for "Becoming a Love and Logic Parent" some time in late March or early April. Mothers and fathers are encouraged to attend this class. For more information, contact (785) 717-4021 or jimwilliams@usd475.org.

bigger choice away like, "no you can't go play in the street," they tend to be more likely to listen to you because you're not telling them no on a constant basis," she said.

While the classes don't push one type of parenting as the best way, they do provide parents with tools to use while raising their children, Nowak said. Besides teaching basics of parenting, the classes also give fathers a chance to meet other dads and to share and solve problems they've had with their children.

Spouses also benefit while dads attend class, Sue said. She greatly appreciated the fact that free food and daycare were provided during the classes.

"Food's free. Daycare's free.

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Classes continued from page 9

Session four includes Accounting for Investment and Finance, World and Regional Geography, Characteristics of Hazardous Materials and Developmental Psychology.

Session five includes Physical Science.

Session six includes Anatomy and Physiology I.

Session seven includes Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response.

The registration deadline for Barton County Community College is Jan. 6. For more information, call (785) 239-0404.

Central Texas College is offering Advanced Oxy-Fuel Welding/Cutting, Automotive Drive Train and Axles, Automotive Electrical Systems, Child Guidance, Creative Arts for Early Childhood, Court Systems and Practices, Use of Force, Digital System, Introduction to Computers, American Government II, U.S. History I, Introduction to Philosophy, Social Problems and Business and Professional Speaking.

For more information about enrollment deadlines and Central Texas College classes, call (785) 784-6240.

Upper Iowa University is offering Accounting Principals I, Research Methods and Juvenile Justice 5:30 to 7:45 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays; Macroeconomic Principles, Leadership Theory and Ethics in Criminal Justice 7:50 to 10:05 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays; Labor Relations, College Mathematics, State and Local Government and a Senior Project class 5:30 to 7:45

p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays; Management Info Systems, Public Budgeting Process, Human Behavior in a Social Environment and Social Psychology 7:50 p.m. to 10:05 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The term is from Jan. 9 to March 13, and the last day to enroll is Jan. 13. For more information, call (785) 239-8254 or visit www.fortriley.uu.edu.

Central Michigan University is offering Personnel Management Feb. 17 and 18 and March 3, 4, 17 and 18. Registration for the class is Jan. 23 to Feb. 10.

Quantitative Analysis in Administrative Decision Making is March 31, April 1, 21, 22 and May 5, 6. Registration is March 6 through 24.

Employee Selection and Evaluation is May 19, 20, June 9, 10, 23, 24. Strategic Planning for Public/Non-Profit Organizations is June 2, 3, 16, 17, 30 and July 1. Registration for those classes is April 24 through May 12.

Administrative Research and Report Methods is July 14, 15, 28, 29 and Aug. 11, 12. Registration is June 5 through July 7.

Advanced Studies in Intercultural Communication is Aug. 25, 26 and Sept. 8, 9, 22, 23. Registration is July 16 through Aug. 28.

Financial Management is Oct. 20, 21, Nov. 3, 4 and Dec. 1 and 2. Collective Bargaining and Labor Law is Oct. 13, 14, 27, 28 and Nov. 10, 11. Registration for the classes is Sept. 11 through Oct. 6.

For more information on Central Michigan University classes, contact (785) 784-4402.

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Community news briefly

Checks to clear faster at AAFES

Officials with the Army and Air Force Exchange Services said stores worldwide will begin electronic processing of checks sometime in 2006, to comply with new U.S. laws.

All AAFES stores are expected to follow suit by the end of 2006, or at least implement some form of paper check conversion by then.

Under the new rules, financial institutions can release funds as soon as they receive an e-mailed or faxed copy of the scanned checks instead of waiting for the paper original to be sent to the home bank.

This means each check writer must be sure to have sufficient funds to cover the amount of the check cashed, officials warned.

Check writers can no longer float checks while depending on a three- or four-day window before the check is processed.

AAFES officials will post signs letting customers know about the new procedures and warning them about the shorter time line for cashing the checks.

Adults talk about books

The adult reading group will meet at 7 p.m. Feb. 2 at the Post Library.

All adults are invited to join the group, which meets the first Thursday of each month.

Anyone wanting to join the

discussion can check out a copy of the book at the library during regular hours.

For more information or to join the group, call 239-5305.

Military YMCA offers programs

The Armed Services YMCA in Junction City offers a wide variety of programs, including a Parents' Day Out from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Thursday.

The ASYMCA also offers a gym program for home-schooled children from 2:15 to 3:45 p.m. every Thursday.

Its newest program, Parents Workout, runs from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, so parents have time to go to the gym.

Any military family members interested in any of these programs should visit the ASYMCA at 111 E. 16th St. or call 238-2972.

Bible study offered females

Female officers interested in Bible study but who cannot devote evenings for such study can join a noontime study group that meets every Friday at lunch in the conference room of Building 212.

For more information, call Capt. Jamie Peer at 239-3280.

King's son to speak at post event

By Nicole Powell

Division EO advisor

The Morris Hill Chapel Choir will be performing at the ceremony.

The son of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will speak during the 24th Infantry Division (Mech) and Fort Riley observance of the late civil

rights leader's birthday. The observance will be from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Jan. 11 at Riley's Conference Center.

Martin Luther King, III, is the chief executive officer of the King Center in Atlanta.

The Morris Hill Chapel Choir at Fort Riley will entertain at the annual observance.

King mobilized thousands of other brave and principled Americans — black and white, renowned and unknown — and began a crusade for justice that continues today.

Fort Riley's observance of Dr. King's birthday offers everyone on post an opportunity to spend some time reflecting on King's

contributions to American society and what society must continue to do to become accepting of individual differences while honoring society's common humanity.

The event is free and open to all Soldiers, family members and civilians of Fort Riley and the surrounding communities.

Marriage and Military Life

When divorce seems unsuitable, try this

About the author

Gene-Thomas Gomulka is a retired Navy chaplain and author of "The Survival Guide for Marriage in the Military," available at www.plaintec.net

Have a question? Write Gene-Thomas at letters@plaintec.net



By Gene-Thomas Gomulka

Retired Navy chaplain

As military personnel continue to return from Iraq and Afghanistan, many find that their marriages are in trouble. Some military couples are wise to seek help before making an appointment with a divorce lawyer. Here is but one of a number of letters in this regard:

Dear Gene-Thomas,

My husband and I went to a chaplain with the hope that he would help us with our marriage following a recent deployment. He suggested that we go away for a romantic weekend together, but he never provided us with any help that addressed our specific problems. We don't want to divorce like so many of our friends. What do you suggest?

— Sandy

Dear Sandy,

Going away for a romantic weekend might help some couples enjoy each other's company

away from their children and other distractions, but ordinarily, it will not help them resolve certain marital problems that might be threatening their marriage.

Not all chaplains are gifted counselors. Some may be great preachers, and others may be excellent administrators; but some, unfortunately, have limited abilities when it comes to helping married, engaged or dating couples.

If you were to take your car to a garage to be fixed and discovered that the mechanic didn't seem to know what he was doing, you might ask around if someone could recommend a qualified and honest mechanic in the area. Likewise, you might ask some friends if they know a military chaplain, counselor or even civilian clergy person in the area that is effective in the area of marriage enrichment. Remember, too, that Military One Source at (800) 342-9647 offers five free counseling sessions that are provided by local civilian counselors under contract with Ceridian Corporation.

If you and your husband are going to resolve your particular problems, it is essential that you be honest in sharing exactly what you like and dislike about your relationship. You need to be able to ask each other: "What can I do better to meet your expectations?" You might consider starting with three concrete matters that each of you can work on achieving. If you find that you cannot make certain improvements and meet a partner's expectations, then you may very well need professional help to improve your relationship.

Couples with children often

recognize how their marital relationship impacts the lives of their children. Even if a couple does not divorce, a problematic marriage relationship still can prove psychologically and emotionally harmful to children.

The fact that you took time to write and attempted to receive help from a chaplain is indicative that you and your husband not only want a better relationship, but that you are also open to accepting help. The earlier you receive it, the better your chances are of preventing small problems from evolving into big problems.

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Fort Riley Sports & Recreation

Friday, January 6, 2006

America's Warfighting Center

Page 13

Sports news in brief

Soldiers win post tourney

Lt. Col. Thomas Brooks of Irvin Army Community Hospital won the Men's A category of the Post Holiday Racquetball Tournament unchallenged late in December.

Spc. Kyle Conrad of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, defeated Wayne Hertel 15-6 and 15-7 to win the Men's B title.

Staff Sgt. Denoa Griffin of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team Rear Detachment, won in the Men's Novice category.

Team compete in Salina

The Fort Riley Middle School wrestling team competed in the Salina South tournament Dec. 17. No team scores were kept, but several Trooper wrestlers won matches.

Frankie Zachar (85 pounds), Matt McManigal (A, 141 pounds), A.J. Cates (B, 141 pounds), Matt Miller (155 pounds) and Jason Elzinga (265 pounds) won second places and silver medals in their classes.

Jonathon Spurlock (120 pounds) and Jordan Fuller (180 pounds) placed third in their classes.

Gunner Schritenthal (120 pounds) and Dominique Quintero (B, 141 pounds) placed fourth in their classes.

Winning a match but not placing were Jacob Youngblood, Tevin Geike and Anthony Kozielecki.

Wrestlers defeat Wamego

The Fort Riley Middle School wrestling team defeated Wamego Middle School 60-36 Dec. 1 during a meet at home.

Troopers Austin Parton, Jacob Youngblood, Frankie Zachar, Dylan Soper, Darius Benton, Zach Birchmeier, A.J. Cates, Robyn Harmon, Matthew Miller, Jordan Fuller, Jason Elzinga, Matthew Righter and Josh Eckel won matches in the meet.

The Troopers lost to Chapman Middle School 40-57 at home Dec. 1. Youngblood, Parton, Soper, Tevin Geike and Gunner Schritenthal won matches.

No team score was kept against Rock Creek Middle School. Troopers Jonathon Spurlock and Jason Elzinga won their matches. Five other Troopers lost their matches against Rock Creek.

Fitness staffs set activities

King Field House and Eyster Pool staffs have scheduled several activities and classes scheduled for the coming week, including:

Jan. 9 – 5:45 to 6:30 p.m., Eyster Pool, abs, buns and thighs; 5:45 to 6:45 p.m., King Field House, cardio pump aerobics; noon to 1 p.m., King Field House, fitness yoga

Jan. 10 – 6:30 to 7:30 a.m., King Field House, PT power-time; 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Eyster Pool, water aerobics; 8:45 to 11:15 a.m., King Field House, fitness assessments

Jan. 11 – 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., King Field House, turbo kick; 5:45 to 6:45 p.m., King Field House, cardio pump aerobics

For more information, call 239-2813.

Armor team 'top guns' in holiday tournament

By Mike Heronemus
Editor

Three quick field goals from three-point range swished the net before 1st Battalion, 34th Armor, players could respond with their own basket Dec. 22 and then go on to claim the post holiday basketball crown 59-45.

Respond quickly they did, and after tying 541st Combat Service Support Battalion at 13-all with less than a third of the first half gone, Armor stayed ahead for the remainder of play in a championship game characterized by tough defensive play and offensive sparks from both teams.

Eight teams entered the holiday tournament that ran four days at King Field House. Armor and CSSB met in the final game after winning two games each in the single-elimination tournament.

Armor used a strong game under the basket to build a 31-24 lead over CSSB at the end of the first 20-minute half. Each team demonstrated shooting skill from beyond the 3-point mark, hitting five treys apiece during the first half. Rebounding skill, however, proved to be a big difference in play as Armor dominated the boards on both ends of the court.

Chris Griggs took a pass after CSSB controlled the opening tip and shot a trey from the corner. Bobby J. Allison added two more treys for CSSB before Armor could score.

The first half ended with Allison and Antonio Hamilton adding 7 points each for CSSB and teammates Griggs contributing 3, Cody Fowler scoring 2 and Antonio Johnson hitting for 5.

Brandon McCoy led Armor scoring in the first half with 8 points, followed by Albert Kelly and Andrew Wong with 6

See Champs, Page 14



Shelton Bell of 1st Bn., 34th Armor, reaches higher than Bobby Allison of 541st CSSB, to grab a rebound in the championship game of the post holiday basketball tournament Dec. 22. Armor teammate Johnnie Young (10) watches to see if Allison holds on to the ball while Brandon McCoy (33) blocks opponent George Cabarrus (23) away from the play.

Post/Heronemus

Army athletes eye U.S. Olympic berths

By Jack L. Giltund
Army News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — With little more than a month before the start of the XX Winter Games in Torino, Italy, 10 Soldiers in the Army World Class Athlete Program remain hopeful for spots on the U.S. Olympic team.

Spc. Mike Kohn, Spc. Steve Holcomb, Capt. Garret Hines and Capt. Lorenzo Smith are competing for spots on the U.S. Bobsled Team. The United States is scheduled to send two two-man and two four-man crews to the Olympics. The top nine athletes will compete in both disciplines.

"As soon as I found out that I wasn't going to be in the 2002 Olympics, I hopped in the driver's seat and haven't really looked back since," said Holcomb, who has been a bobsled athlete since 1998, when he graduated from Park City Winter Sports High School in Park City, Utah.

"This sport is basically experience. The more you have, the better you get. The learning curve is still steep, but it's starting to plateau a little bit as I start to catch the other drivers."

During the U.S. National Bobsled Team Trials in October, he and teammates Brock Kreitzburg, Curt Tomasevich and 2002 Olympic silver medalist Bill Schuffenhauer posted the fastest run time — 55.5 seconds — of Day One at Canada Olympic Park in Calgary, Canada.

Holcomb finished first overall in four-man competitions during

See Olympics, Page 15

Michelle "Mickey" Kelly, splashes through a creek en route to winning the cross-country portion of the 2003 U.S. Modern Pentathlon Championships at Colorado Springs, Colo. She recently finished second in the women's division of the 2005 NORCECA Modern Pentathlon Championships in Guatemala City.

ANS/Hipps



Soldiers lead U.S. to win

Lieutenants finish first, second in pentathlon

By Tim Hipps
Army News Service

ARLINGTON, Va. — First Lt. Niul Manks and 2nd Lt. Michelle "Mickey" Kelly finished first and second, respectively, at the 2005 NORCECA Modern Pentathlon Championships Dec. 3 and 4 in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Manks led Team USA to victory in the men's division of the five-sport competition between five teams from North and Central America and Caribbean countries. Kelly, who finished runner-up to Cuba's Katie Rodriguez, led the U.S. women to a second-place finish.

Manks trains in the U.S. Army

World Class Athlete Program at Fort Carson, Colo. Kelly, who graduated Dec. 6 from Officer Basic Course, is scheduled to enter WCAP in early January.

Manks compiled 5,344 points to nip teammate Sam Saksen (5,340) of Somerset, Pa.

"I was very pleased and surprised how prepared he was mentally and physically, especially with his swimming," said U.S. Coach Janusz Peciak, a veteran of eight Olympic teams. "He has the potential, but he's never (before) put all five sports together well. It was a perfect day for him."

Kelly is the U.S. women's reigning national champion in modern pentathlon, a five-sport event that includes

pistol shooting, fencing, swimming, equestrian riding and cross-country running. She amassed 5,052 points in Guatemala City and was one of four U.S. women who scored a perfect 1,200 points on the ride.

"When she comes back to Colorado and trains, she'll get a lot stronger," Peciak said.

Despite attending OBC, Kelly still managed to win the women's run. Emily Shertzer (4,888) of Colorado Springs, Colo., and Suzanne Stettinius (4,692) of Parkton, Md., completed the U.S. women's squad.

Air Force Capt. Eli Bremer, the reigning Pan American champion, rounded out the U.S. men's contingent in fourth place with 5,308 points.

Red-tailed hawk common on post

Markings makes identification confusing sometimes

By Alan Hynek
Fish and wildlife biologist



Alan Hynek

The most common hawk on Fort Riley is also the most common bird of prey in North America. The red-tailed hawk is a member of the Buteo family, which includes the red-shouldered hawk, Swainson's hawk and the rough-legged hawk among others.

Like most raptors in this family, the red-tailed hawk soars over open

country in search of prey, but also perches in trees watching for an opportunity.

As its name implies, the red tail is a defining characteristic. However, red-tailed hawk identification is not always easy and can be confusing.

First off, the red colored tail is only found in adult birds in their second year. To further confuse identifica-

tion, red-tailed hawks have light and dark morphological features. Both kinds of birds are found on Fort Riley.

More of the lighter-colored hawks can be found across North America than the darker birds, but the percentage of dark phase red-tails increases as you travel west. Additionally, the

See Wildside, Page 14



The red-tailed hawk, seen here soaring above Fort Riley, is a common sight on post.

Conservation Division photo



Army cowboy wins 8th title

Army News Service

LAS VEGAS – The U.S. Army rodeo team's Fred Whitfield finished the 2005 Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association season as world champion in the tie-down division.

This was Whitfield's eighth world title – seven in tie-down, one in all-around – at the National Finals Rodeo. In the tenth and final round of competition, Whitfield tied his calf in 7.4 seconds, the third fastest time of the day.

Cody DeMoss (second in saddle bronc riding), Trevor Brazile (third in all-around and 11th in tie-down), Zack Oakes (11th in bull riding) and Brittany Pozzi (10th in barrel racing) also competed for the Army team at the NFR.

About USAAC

The U.S. Army Accessions Command is headquartered at Fort Monroe, Va. It is charged with overseeing recruiting and training for new Soldiers and officers. USAAC is composed of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command at Fort Knox, Ky., the U.S. Army Cadet Command at Fort Monroe, Va., and the U.S. Army Training Center at Fort Jackson, S.C.

"It takes courage, strength and stamina to be the best in the world," Brazile said. "This title is for the Soldiers who defend our country and preserve the peace every day. They never quit and never accept defeat."

The Army-sponsored athletes competed in an arena full of rodeo fans who paid special tribute to

and welcomed home some Operation Iraqi Freedom Soldiers. U.S. Soldiers also sang the national anthem.

"No two titles are the same, but each one makes me feel stronger," said Whitfield, whose eight titles tie him for the most world titles in tie-down roping.

"It takes both physical and

mental strength to loop a calf, dismount a horse and then chase down the calf. What we do, what Soldiers do, is use all of our mental and physical strength to complete the mission," he said.

This was the third title for Army-sponsored athletes in the PRCA since the partnership developed before the 2004 season. Last year, Luke Branquinho won the steer wrestling title and Brazile captured the all-around title.

"Every day these men and women impress me. The focus and discipline they bring to their work mirrors that of U.S. Soldiers," said Col. John B. Snyder, director of Strategic Outreach for U.S. Army Accessions Command. "I'm proud to have them on the Army team."



Shelton Bell (25) of 1st Bn., 34th Armor, starts to whip a pass past 541st CSSB opponent Jamie Smith (31) in the post holiday basketball tournament Dec. 22 at King Field House. Other players close to the action are 541st CSSB's Bobby Allison (3) and Armor's Brandon McCoy (33).



Albert Kelly of 1st Bn., 34th Armor, grabs a rebound in the championship game of the post holiday basketball tournament Dec. 22. Armor won the game against 541st CSSB. Kelly is surrounded by opponents James Shaw (32) George Cabarrus (23) and Antonio Hamilton (4). Teammate Brandon McCoy (33) tries to move in to help Kelly.

Champs

continued from page 13

each, Michael Arrington with 5, Cedric Davis with 3, Shelton Bell with 2 and Don Hickson with 1.

Fowler opened the second half with a trey for CSSB, but Armor put in 4 points of its own to expand its lead by a point.

Throughout the second half, Armor's Arrington and Bell took the ball to the hoop in effective under-the-basket offensive play that kept CSSB defenders off guard. With less than 4 1/2 minutes left to play, Armor led CSSB 52-39.

CSSB kept the lead below 15 points, so the last two minutes of play resulted in the clock stopping for each infraction by either team, and both teams committed several fouls as play continued at a fevered pitch.

Bell sank the last shot of the game as the buzzer ended the battle between the undefeated teams.

Bell led Armor scoring in the second half with 7 points, followed by McCoy and Wong with 5 each, Arrington and Kelly with 4 each, Hickson with 2 and Ty Cobb with 1.

Other games:

1st Bn., 34th Armor, defeated 101st FSB 49-22 Dec. 19

331st Signal Co., defeated 1st Bn., 190th MPs, 46-34 Dec. 19

541st CSSB defeated 1st Bn., 16th Inf., 59-50 Dec. 20 HHC, 24th Inf. Div. (Mech), defeated MEDDAC 45-30 Dec. 20

1st Bn., 34th Armor, defeated 331st Signal Co. 52-41 Dec. 21

541st CSSB defeated HHC, 24th Inf. Div. (Mech), 58-48 Dec. 21

Fowler led second-half scoring for CSSB with 6 points, James Shaw with 5, Johnson and Griggs with 3 each and D.J. Starks and George Cabarrus with 2 each.

Shaw, Griggs and Johnson hit 3-pointers in the second half; Armor hit none.

Wildside

continued from page 13

juvenile red-tailed hawk is often so dark that no markings are apparent. It also does not have a red tail, so identification can be difficult.

The red-tailed hawk averages 18 to 24 inches in length. As with most birds of prey, the female is about 25 percent larger than the male.

Red-tail hawks are monogamous and will remain together for many years. They also are very territorial, with ranges up to two square miles.

About 80 percent of their diet consists of small mammals, including mice, rats and rabbits. The remainder of the diet consists of reptiles and other birds.

The post's conservation office has conducted winter raptor counts over the last 15 years.

The species composition of all raptors has stayed relatively constant, with about 75 percent being

Want more info?

For more information on birds of prey, contact a member of the Conservation Office at 239-6211 or visit the Web site at <http://www.riley.army.mil/Services/Fort/Environment/NatResources>.

red-tailed hawks.

Other birds of prey commonly documented on Fort Riley include the rough-legged hawk, kestrel, northern harrier, barred owl, prairie falcon and bald eagles.

The eyesight of a red-tailed hawk is eight times as powerful as a human's. If a hawk could read, it could read a newspaper from seven stories high. It can see a

mouse in a field a mile away.

However, powerful distance eyesight comes with a potentially detrimental trade off. Most hawks are farsighted, which is why they sometimes fly into fences or poles.

In some cultures, such as the Native American culture, hawks and eagles are considered sacred. Hawks are symbols of spirit, wisdom and power. Even their feathers and talons have a special meaning in ceremonies and ceremonial dress.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Bald Eagle Protection Act and The Endangered Species Act prohibit the taking or possession of any part of a raptor except for special circumstances, including ceremonial use by Native Americans.

The word hawk is the common name for many of the birds of prey of the family Accipitridae, which includes eagles, kites and

harriers. Members of the genus *Buteo* are also called "hawks" in North America and "buzzards" in the Old World.

In the Americas, some members of the related family Falconidae have been called "hawks" in the past; the peregrine falcon, for example, was known as "duck hawk" and the merlin as "pigeon hawk."

The osprey is commonly called "fish hawk" and the kestrel "chicken hawk." There is no clear-cut definition of what constitutes a "hawk."

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act makes it unlawful for anyone to kill, capture, collect, possess, buy, sell, trade, ship, import or export any migratory bird, including feathers, parts, nests or eggs.

Furthermore, bald eagles and golden eagles are protected under the Endangered Species Act and Eagle Protection Act.

Olympic agreement benefits disabled veteran athletes

By Samantha L. Quigley
AFPS

WASHINGTON – Athletes participating in the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Wheelchair Games and National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic are now eligible to qualify for U.S. Paralympic teams thanks to an agreement signed Nov. 17 by representatives of the VA and the U.S. Olympic Committee.

"It is my honor as a representative of the U.S. Olympic Committee to be here today to memorialize the shared commitment of the U.S. Olympic Committee and the Department of Veterans Affairs toward disabled veterans and the Paralympic program," Jim Scherr, chief executive officer of the Olympic Committee, said.

Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield joined Scherr in signing the memorandum of understanding. Indiana Rep. Steve Buyer, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, was on hand for the event as well.

Partnerships like this one enable the VA to extend its reach and better serve veterans, Mansfield said.

Lisa Bard, a disabled veteran athlete from Germantown, Md., is a testament to why this partnership is vital. Disabled in a 1988 training accident at

Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Bard rediscovered her ability to compete in sports she's always loved and some she didn't know she had an affinity for through the VA's Wheelchair Games and the Winter Sports Clinic, sponsored by the VA and the Disabled American Veterans.

Knowing little more than the basics of basketball, she played on the veterans exhibition team with nine men. She now coaches wheelchair basketball for Blaze Sports in Washington and has played point guard for four years on an all-men's team.

"At the veterans games ... we get opportunities, and all veterans get opportunities, to participate in so many different sports," Bard said. "I think for a lot of people, both newly injured vets and those of us who have been around for awhile and didn't know what we could get back into, it opens up such a world for us."

"It's all about what you can do. It's focusing on the ability, not the disability," she said.

"There really is no limit." Veterans sports programs provide many first-time opportunities for disabled vets, and that provides a boost to rehabilitation, mentally and physically, Bard said. She said she expects this new partnership will help bring veterans to a higher level of competition.

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Olympics

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the two-day event and earned the right to pilot USA I during World Cup competitions leading up to the Olympics. Kohn finished in third place and is piloting USA III.

Sgt. Jacob Beste, Spc. Sarah Kamiliewicz, Spc. Jill Krause, Spc. Denise Teela and Spc. Jeremy Teela are vying for spots on the U.S. Biathlon Team. Five men and five women will represent the United States as biathletes at the Winter Olympics.

"The United States is expected to field its strongest biathlon squad in Torino," said U.S. Biathlon Association officials in a press release. "Army WCAP athletes Jeremy Teela and Jill Krause will potentially bolster the team," the release stated.

Spc. Ryan McDonald hopes to become the first snowboarder to represent WCAP in the Winter Games. The U.S. Snowboard Team is scheduled to send 16 athletes to the Olympics. These athletes will compete in Halfpipe, Parallel Giant Slalom or Snowboardcross competitions.

McDonald's specialty is Parallel Giant Slalom. He ranks fourth in the point totals that will determine who receives a spot on the U.S. team in that discipline.

Two WCAP Soldiers will represent the Army at the Winter Olympics as coaches: Sgt. Tuffield Latour is head coach for the U.S. Olympic Men's Bobsled Team and Spc. William Tavares is head coach for the U.S. Olympic Women's Bobsled Team.

This story contributed by USACFSC Public Affairs.

Possible event times:

WCAP athletes may be a part of the following Olympic events. Scheduled times are listed in Eastern Standard Time.

Bobsled:

- Feb. 18 – Two-man, heat 1, 11:30 a.m.; two-man, heat 2, 1:20 p.m.
- Feb. 19 – Two-man, heat 3, 11:30 a.m.; two-man, heat 4, 1:20 p.m.
- Feb. 24 – Four-man, heat 1, 11:30 p.m.; four-man, heat 2, 1:20 p.m.
- Feb. 25 – Four-man, heat 3, 11:30 p.m.; four-man, heat 4, 1:20 p.m.

Biathlon:

- Feb. 11 – Men's 20-kilometer Individual, 7 p.m.
- Feb. 13 – Women's 15-kilometer Individual, 6 a.m.
- Feb. 14 – Men's 10-kilometer sprint, 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 16 – Women's 7.5-kilometer sprint, 6 a.m.
- Feb. 18 – Men's 12.5-kilometer pursuit, 8:30 p.m.
- Feb. 21 – Men's 4x7.5-kilometer relay, 6 a.m.
- Feb. 23 – Women's 4x6-kilometer relay, 6 a.m.
- Feb. 25 – Men's 15-kilometer mass start, 4 a.m.; women's 12.5-kilometer start, 6 a.m.

Snowboarding:

- Feb. 22 – Men's PGS qualification run, 4 a.m.; men's PGS elimination run, 4:37 a.m.; men's PGS 1/8 run, 7 a.m.; men's PGS quarterfinals, 7:34 a.m.; men's PGS consolation 5-8, 7:52 a.m.; men's PGS semifinals, 7:56 a.m.; men's PGS classification 5-8, 8:10 a.m.; men's PGS finals, 8:14 a.m.

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Travel & Fun in Kansas

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America's Warfighting Center

Friday, January 6, 2006

Leisure time ideas

At the movies:

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$3.50 for adults and \$1.75 for children 11 and under. Children under the age of 5 are free except during children's matinees or expected sell-outs.

Jan. 6 - Walk the line (PG-13) 135 min

Jan. 7 - Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (PG-13) 150 min

Jan. 8 - Zathura (PG) 113 min

Jan. 12 - Derailed (R) 110 min

Jan. 13 - Saw II (R) 91 min

Jan. 14 - Aeon Flux (PG-13) 93 min

Jan. 15 - Just Friends (PG-13) 88 min

Jan. 19 - Saw II (R) 91 min
For more information, call 784-2226 or 784-2640.

Get away and explore Kansas. Check out details on these and other events on the Kansas Travel & Tourism Web site, www.travelKS.com.

Junction City:

What: "Murder Plays a Sour Note." The Junction City Arts Council offers a chance for guests to solve a mystery while teaming up with five other dinner guests.

When: 6 p.m. Jan. 14

Where: Location revealed upon registration

Phone: Preregister by calling 762-2581 (913) 371-3264

Web site: www.junctioncityac.org

Admission: \$25 for dinner and party.

Abilene:

What: Victorian Christmas at the Lebold Mansion. The old-fashioned Christmas is celebrated throughout the mansion - from cellar to attic. Christmas is ablaze at The Lebold.

When: Tuesday through Sunday only through Jan. 8, 2006

Where: 106 N. Vine, Lebold Mansion

Phone: (785) 263-4356

Web site: www.lebold-mansion.com

Manhattan:

What: "Only the Best." Gallery exhibit featuring 23 of the region's best landscape artists, including many from the "Homage to the Flint Hills" touring exhibit, and four of Manhattan's most collected ceramic artists, marks the return of many favorite Gallery artists and introduces several artists new to the Gallery.

When: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday through Jan. 14, 2006

Where: 406 1/2 Poyntz Ave., Strecker-Nelson Gallery

Phone: (785) 537-2099

Web site: www.strecker-nelsongallery.com

Admission: Free

Cottonwood Falls:

What: Music at the Emma. Weekly acoustic jam sessions playing country, gospel, bluegrass, and rock and roll. Musicians and audience welcome.

When: 7:30 p.m. Fridays only, year-round

Where: 317 Broadway, Emma Chase Café

Phone: (620) 273-6020

Admission: Free

Bird watching

Parks host eagle days in January

By Anna Morelock
Staff writer

Winter brings snow and cold weather to Kansas, but it also brings bald eagles passing through on their way south. Nature lovers get two chances to view the U.S. national bird in its native habitat in January.

Staff members at Tuttle Creek Lake plan to host their annual Eagle Day from 9 a.m. to noon Jan. 7. Participants should meet at the Manhattan fire station located on the northeast corner of Denison and Kimball Avenues.

Dan Mulhern, a biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, will talk with participants about eagle nesting habits. Pat Silovsky, director of the Milford Nature Center near Junction City, will provide a live bald eagle for the presentation.

Eagle watchers will tour through the area downstream from Tuttle Creek Dam to search for eagles in the wild.

Milford Nature Center staff members plan to host their Eagle Days program from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Jan. 14 and noon to 5 p.m. Jan. 15. The staff will present programs on eagles, owls and raptors of Kansas, including a live eagle program, throughout the day at the nature center.

Buses will leave the nature center every hour on Jan. 14 beginning at 1 p.m. and every half hour starting at 1 p.m. Jan. 15. The buses will take participants to Milford Lake to view the eagles in their natural habitat.

Eagle programs are also planned at Perry and Clinton Lakes, both east of Topeka, on Jan. 21.



Two bald eagles, the U.S. national bird, rest in a tree near Milford Lake.

If you go:

What: Eagle Days
Tuttle Creek Lake: 9 a.m. to noon Jan. 7, meet at the fire station on the corner of Denison and Kimball in Manhattan. **Phone:** (785) 539-8511, ext. 13.

Milford Nature Center: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Jan. 14 and noon to 5 p.m. Jan. 15. **Ongoing programs at the nature center:** 3115 Hatchery Drive. Take Kansas Highway 57 to Hatchery Drive and take a right. **Phone:** (785) 238-5323

Perry Lake: Jan. 21, **Phone:** (785) 597-5739

Clinton Lake: Jan. 21, **Phone:** (785) 843-7065

Admission: Free



A bald eagle swoops down to catch dinner from Milford Lake. During the winter months, eagles can be found in Kansas as they migrate south.

What's so big about Kansas?

The wide-open spaces in Kansas allow people to dream and make big things happen, state tourism officials claim.

That positioning statement is at the core of the new Kansas image campaign. The new "Kansas. As big as you think" message is found at dozens of attractions throughout the state, including:

Big Flight

Born and raised in Atchison, Amelia Earhart disappeared without a trace, but not before becoming the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

Her life can be discovered at the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum, located in the home where she was born.

Big Animals

The state animal, the buffalo, still roams the plains of Kansas and can be found at several of the state's wildlife refuges.

Visitors to two of these, the

Finney Game Refuge in Garden City and the Maxwell Game Preserve in Canton, can get an up-close look at these majestic creatures that can grow to six feet tall and weigh up to 2,000 pounds. Both refuges offer guided tours into the prairies.

Big Rocks

Rock City near Minneapolis has more than 200 giant sandstone concretions (large round rocks), some as large as a house, on view in a field as large as two football fields.

Visitors won't find this many giant concretions anywhere else in the world. The geological wonders are left over from the inland ocean that once covered part of the state. It's now a designated national landmark.

Big Shovel

The second largest electric coal shovel in the world can be found at West Mineral. Big Brutus, as it's fondly called, sits in the heart

of a former coal mining region of Kansas. Visitors can even climb to the top of the boom - 16 stories high.

Big Well

The world's largest hand-dug well in Greensburg was a masterpiece in pioneer engineering when it was completed in 1888.

At 109 feet deep and 32 feet in diameter, the city of Greensburg used it for its public water supply until 1932.

Today, tourists can walk to the bottom of the well and experience this engineering marvel firsthand.

The well's visitor center contains another big attraction - the world's largest pallastite meteorite (1,000 pounds) found in a nearby field.

Big Marsh

Lying in a natural depression of about 60 square miles near Great

Bend, Cheyenne Bottoms is the largest marsh in the interior of the United States.

Designated a Wetland of International Importance, it is considered the most important shorebird migration point in the western hemisphere. At least 320 bird species have been recorded at the Bottoms.

Big Fish

The 51 state fishing lakes and fishing areas and 26 federal reservoirs provide more than 175,000 surface acres of water for fishing enthusiasts to enjoy.

From channel catfish to walleye and bass, Kansas doesn't disappoint when reeling in the big ones.

Check out these and other attractions on the Kansas Travel & Tourism Web site, www.travelKS.com or call 800-2KANSAS for a copy of the new 2005 Kansas Getaway Guide.

Military meets Tarzan in NYC

MWR offers discounted show tickets

By Tim Hips
AFPS

WASHINGTON - Military personnel can now access discount-priced tickets to Broadway shows without being part of a tourist group.

Off Duty Travel and Clear Channel Entertainment have joined forces to offer priority access to Broadway and off-Broadway shows in New York and other select cities for Morale, Welfare and Recreation customers.

MWR patrons, including those affiliated with the Coast Guard, can visit www.offdutytravel.com for information about the program and click on the "Broadway Shows & Broadway Touring Shows" link on the left.

"For years, military communities have responded enthusiastically when offered the opportunity to purchase tickets for touring Broadway shows, as well as filling spaces on occasional group tours to New York City, where show tickets are a big part of the reason for going," said Dan Yount, chief of Leisure Travel Services at the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

Clear Channel periodically will determine the best shows available and place them on its EventUsher.com system, allowing MWR patrons access to tickets for marquee shows before they become scarce.

Traditional shows featured for holidays

Traditional shows will be featured during holidays and peak periods. Other shows will be added to the Web site as tickets become available.

The July 7 performance of Disney's "Tarzan the Broadway Musical" at Richard Rodgers Theatre in New York is the first play offered in the MWR program. It's the tale of an infant stranded by shipwreck on the west shore of Africa and reared by a tribe of gorillas.

When Tarzan eventually encounters his first human - Jane Porter, a curious young explorer - both their worlds are transformed forever, according to Disney's promotions.

MWR offices are responsible for distributing tickets, so it's important for MWR patrons to list their location in the system's appropriate field. A \$4 per ticket processing fee will be charged, but shipping is free. A portion of the proceeds will benefit MWR.

If the dates and shows desired do not appear on the Web site, customers can make requests by e-mail to NYGroups@clearchannel.com. If sufficient interest is expressed in particular shows and dates, Clear Channel officials said, they will attempt to make tickets available.

The theater program eventually is planned to expand into more venues.

"In the future, the Web site will post availability for touring Broadway shows coming to local venues such as Baltimore; Washington, D.C.; San Antonio and many other cities located close to military installations," Yount said.

Tim Hips is assigned to the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center public affairs office.

